

JEWEL PURPOSE

Precious metals and stones are not just for the body. Here, we reveal the intricate links between the great jewellery houses and interior designers, in a story of parallel passions

PHOTOGRAPHY: ROMAIN ROUCOULES CREATIVE DIRECTION: CARAGH MCKAY AND NICK VINSON

When Paris high jewellery house Van Cleef & Arpels opened its first boutique in 1906, on Place Vendôme, one of its first orders was neither a pearl necklace nor a diamond ring. Rather, it was a jewel designed to adorn the home: a scale model of the New York socialite Eugene Higgins' Varuna yacht, crafted in gold, silver, jasper, ebony and enamel. What made it particularly unique, however, was its modern functionality – it was fitted with an electric bell pusher to call the butler.

By the 1930s, Van Cleef & Arpels' precious approach to technology elevated women's wants with the marvellous minaudière, a rare 1935 version of which is photographed here. This tin box-inspired purse was engineered in gold, lacquer and gemstones to contain mirrors, face powders, a cigarette lighter, a lipstick holder, a tiny watch and, in this case, a pair of folding diamond-set spectacles.

Inspired by 'Time, Nature, Love', a Van Cleef & Arpels exhibition that opened at Milan's Palazzo Reale in November 2019, we began to consider a story with all the other great jewellery and luxury maisons that elevate everyday objects into precious ones. This year, we were given kind permission from some of them to photograph precious archive objects from the 1900s to today.

Over the next few pages, we reveal the gently humorous designs of Bulgari, a 140-year-old house whose pioneering way with silver and gold has led it to create everything from precious office accessories

to joyously social pieces. There are exquisite workplace tools from Montblanc, also established in 1906, in Hamburg. Montblanc pen nibs are always 14ct or 18ct solid gold, their 1980s gilded ink wells and blotters fashioned in Baccarat crystal.

Puiforcat, founded in 1820 in Paris, was given its own distinctive signature four generations later when Jean Puiforcat based the house designs on rigorous lines, cubes, spheres and cones, combining silver with vermeil, as illustrated in the 1937 vase and candleholders we selected here.

We are so honoured that these legendary houses agreed to draw deep from their vaults to allow us to photograph these museum-quality designs that we have paired them with furniture and furnishings that might well be crafted in their own workshops. Eric Schmitt's blue patinated bronze console, for instance; Michele De Lucchi's blue glazed porcelain and 24ct gold coupe for Sèvres, and Sahco's hammered-satin wallcovering that seems to have been fashioned with a silversmith's tool. Each element beautifully reflects the notion of jewels for the home.

Meanwhile, Boucheron, the Parisian house created in 1858, offers the oldest jewelled object in our story – a lapis lazuli perfume bottle from 1900. Steeped in the Belle Époque style that saw the high jeweller augment its collaborative design ethos, it's a fragrant reminder that adornment for the home and the body remain forever entwined. ★

'Sparte' console (2021), price on request, by Eric Schmitt, for Carpenters Workshop Gallery. Gold-and-diamond beauty nécessaire with applied gold and diamond bees and interior lipstick and powder cases (1949); 'Like a Queen' diamond and white gold detachable earrings (2023); amourette-wood cat sculpture with inlaid gold tail-brush and daffodil yellow-diamond eyes (1988); lapis lazuli and gold perfume bottle (1900), all by Boucheron. 'Coppa dell'etica' cup (2011), price on request, by Michele De Lucchi, for Manufacture de Sèvres. 'Composition Guillochés Croisé' mural (2018), by Pierre Bonnefille



'Lawrence' ottoman, from £1,785, by Armani Casa. Ashtray in sterling silver, gold and enamel (1974), by Bulgari. 'Manhattan' shot glass, £97, by Saint-Louis. 'Flaschette' carafe in gold (1971), by Bulgari. Playing cards (1934), £100, by Jean Puiforcat, for Puiforcat. 'Menhir' table (1983-2020), £3,538, by Giotto Stoppino and Lodovico Acerbis, from Acerbis Design. 'Santos Dumont' cigarette case in silver and gold (1977); 'Temple' paperweight in gold, lapis lazuli, onyx and diamond (1977); ashtray in sterling silver, gold and enamel (1974); card case in silver and two-tone gold and enamel (1974); 'Flaschette' carafe in gold (1972), all by Bulgari. Glass, cards and ottoman, as before. 'Turandot' wallcovering, £240 per m, by Armani Casa. 'Vérité' rug (1941), from £8,145, by Charlotte Perriand, from the Cassina Details Collection, by CC-Tapis



Space

Console (2017), from £7,355, by Aldo Bakker, for Karakter Copenhagen. 'BV60' vase (1950s), from £82, by Stefan Rath, for Lobmeyr, from Abask. Clock in rose quartz, yellow gold and turquoise (1970); silk-grosgrain bag for minaudière; 'Snail' pill box in yellow gold and sapphire (1968); 'Shell' powder case in yellow gold, with emerald push button (1957); minaudière in yellow gold, lacquer and diamonds with removable powder compact, cigarette case, cigarette lighter, comb, lipstick holder and a pair of foldable white gold and diamond spectacles with case (1935), all by Van Cleef & Arpels Collection. 'Perlée Couleurs' between-the-finger ring in rose gold, carnelian and diamonds (2016), from £7,450, by Van Cleef & Arpels. 'Eldorado' wallcovering in Oro, £148 per m, by Rubelli





'Edison' table (1985), from £3,312, by Vico Magistretti, for Cassina. On table, clockwise from top left, 'Hecate' table lamp (2019), £14,730, by Barber Osgerby, for Hermès. 'Meisterstück' pen holder and ink well in gold-plated brass, crystal glass and black resin (1992); 'Meisterstück 149' fountain pen, £795; paper and envelope set, £50, all by Montblanc. Calligraphy by Lizzie Matthews Calligraphy. 'Meisterstück' ink blotter in gold-plated brass, crystal glass and black resin (1992); letter opener in gold-plated brass and black resin (1993); Rosso Antico ink bottle, £33 per 50ml, all by Montblanc. 'Seconda' chair (1982), from £1,600, by Mario Botta, for Alias. 'Meisterstück 4810' pouch, £560, by Montblanc. 'Iseo' rug in silver, £2,151 per sq m, by Jan Kath



'Azo' console (2017), price on request, by François Bauchet, for Galerie Kreo. 'Art Déco 37' oval tray (1937), £3,400; flared vase with gold-gilt appliqué work (1935), price on request, both by Jean Puiforcat, for Puiforcat. Flower arrangement by Castor Fleuriste. 'Dorsale' cuff, €6,200; 'Dorsale' ring, €3,200, both in blackened silver and yellow gold, by Elie Top. Three-branch candleholder (1937), price on request, by Jean Puiforcat; 'Art Déco 37' vide-poche (inspired by a coffee set designed by Jean Puiforcat in 1937), £605, both from Puiforcat. 'Dumas' fabric in 0008, £171 per m, by Sahco

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